Useful links and places:

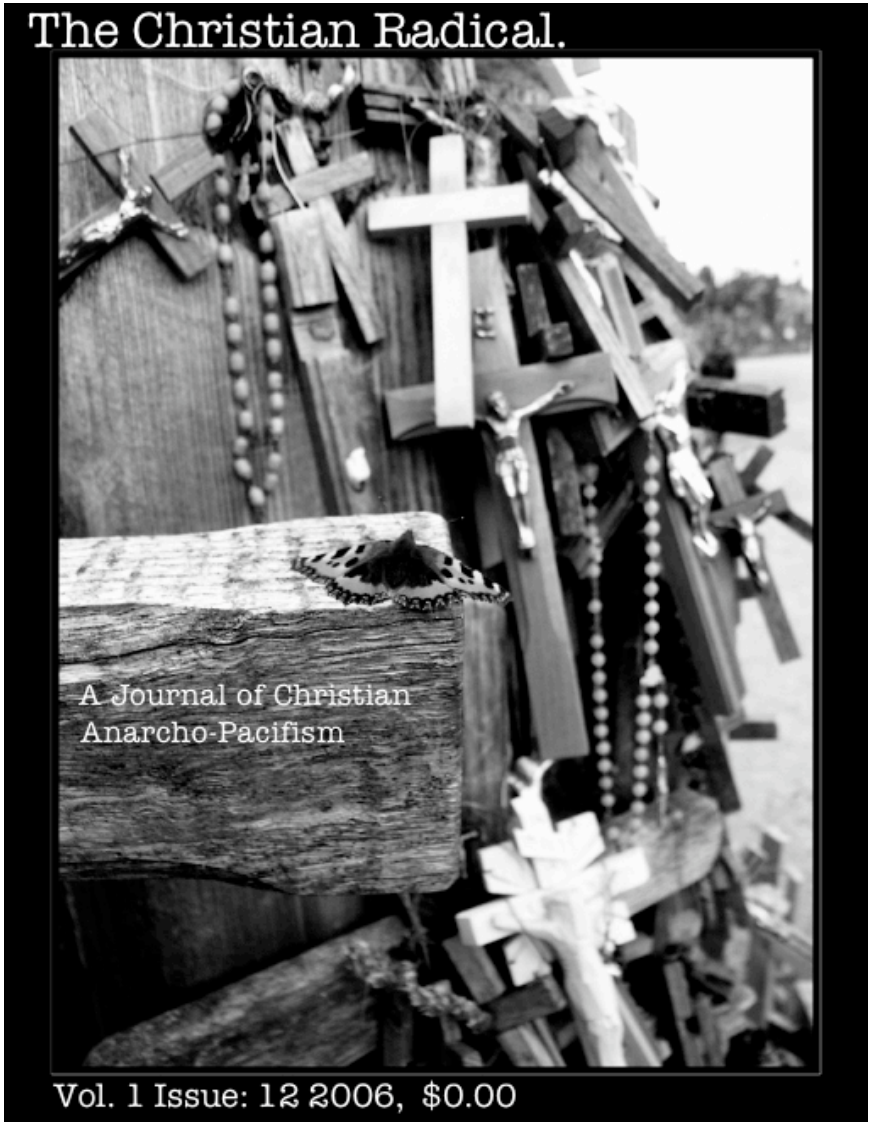
-Catholic Worker international websites:
www.catholicworker.com
www.catholicworker.org
www.lacatholicworker.org
www.ca.geocities.com/vancouvercatholicworker

-Radical/Progressive Christianity
www.jesusradicals.org
www.nonviolentjesus.blogspot.com
www.geezmagazine.org
www.catholicanarchy.org
www.anglocatholicsocialism.org
www.disseminary.org
www.tierra-nueva.org
www.treebythewater.org/
www.romancatholicwomenpriests.com
www.free-episcopal.org

-Anti-War
www.stopwar.ca
www.ivaw.net
www.resisters.ca
www.wri-irg.org

-Activism
www.foodnotbombs.net
www.vcn.bc.ca/citizens-handbook
www.iww.org
www.deathpenalty.org
www.freegan.info/?page=home
www.justicia4migrantworkers.org

-Other Good Websites:
www.gnn.tv
www.spartacusbooks.org
http://www.bcm-net.org/
www.southcentralfarmers.com
www.commongroundrelief.org
www.freewebs.com/stormnyc/index.htm
www.jonahhouse.org



Our Ways or God's Ways: Love is the Measure

Victoria Marie, o.s.c.
Vancouver Catholic Worker

> *This people honours me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines. You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition." Then he said to them, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition! (Mark 7:7-9).*

Father Al's sermon expounded on this section of the Gospel— or at least it was this part of the Gospel and Father Al's sermon that I focused on. So when I read Acts 16:16-40 today, certain elements seemed to reinforce yesterday's Gospel and sermon. Acts 16:16-40 tells of Paul and Silas being beaten and jailed. Their offence was expelling a 'spirit of divination' from a slave girl whose owners used her gift to make money.

While they are in jail an earthquake occurs and the chains and cell doors of all the prisoners, including Paul and Silas are broken. Fearing that all his prisoners have escaped, the jailer is about to commit suicide. However, Paul stays the jailer's hand by alerting him to the fact that all the prisoners are present. Overcome by Paul's integrity, the jailer is converted along with his whole family. Although pardoned by the magistrate the next day, Paul refuses to leave the jail until the magistrate publicly pardons them, which the magistrate does.

Now you may be thinking: "How does this relate to yesterday's Gospel?" Well, it has to do with human tradition and human interpretation. The girl with the spirit of divination had followed Paul and Silas saying that they had come to preach salvation to the people. On the face of it, one would interpret this as a good thing. However, Paul saw that this spirit of divination in the girl was being used for the most part for money-making purposes. Doing nothing about his, while having the power to do something, would have been condoning this misuse.

For me, however, the most significant opportunity for human (mis)interpretation occurs in the jail. I am sure I am not alone in thinking when those prison doors opened and those chains fell off that I would have put distance—and put it quickly—between myself and that jail cell. Further, I would have surmised that this was God's gift of freedom to me for preaching the Word and doing God's will. Paul, however, perceived that in this instance at least, God's purpose entailed more than facilitating a divine jail break. Had Paul and Silas left, the other prisoners would likely have followed. The suicide of the jailer would have been the consequence. By staying put, Paul prevented this tragedy. Paul's honest, integrity and refusal to take and advantage of a disastrous occurrence served to open the jailer's hear to receive Paul's message.

This story is a potent one for me. It alerts me to the likely possibility of misinterpreting and there misusing the opportunities and gifts God gives to us, for example, the gift of power given to the Pharisees. In Sunday's Gospel they use the law as a weapon, applying it without love and with no regard for the consequences. They use it to try and silence Jesus so that the status quo, along with their power, will be maintained. Paul on the other hand, thought with love. That is, he though beyond his own personal profit. He asked himself, "What will happen to the jailer if all of us escape, if the prison is empty?" Paul knew and is teaching us that God's gifts to us are expressions of Divine Love. Paul knew and is teaching us the best way to use God's gifts is to consider—with love—the consequences of how we use our gifts. As Dorothy Day said, "Love is the reason…. Love is the measure." <

A short letter to the editor:

The Catholic Worker movement continues to provide many of the principal nonviolent actors to various movements--and we are looking for more. In Portland, Oregon, Whitefeather House is a small CW named for a Native American plowshare resister from Minnesota, and our focus--nonviolent resistance--honors him.

We periodically have space for a person who wishes to join our core community for a few months or longer.

Each member is expected to contribute to the house budget to some degree, is expected to do Whitefeather activism, and has her/his own room.

The house is vegetarian and alcohol-free. If all these un-American restrictions and expectations appeal to you, contact Tom at Whitefeather:

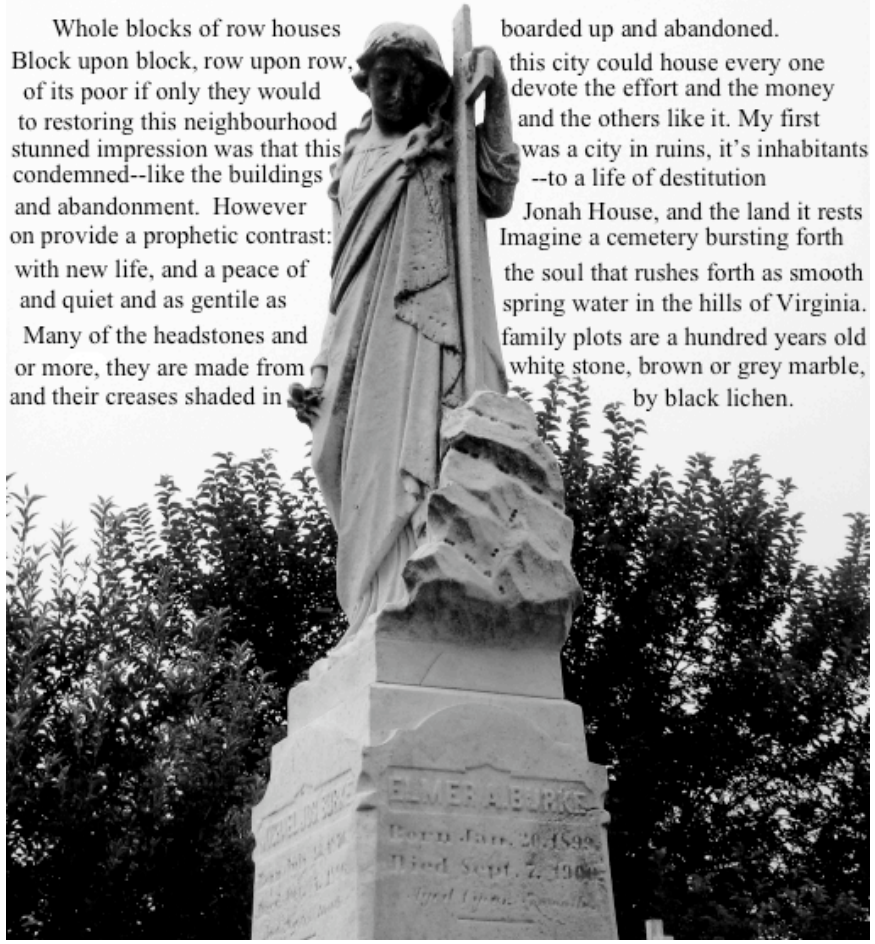
pcwtom@gmail.com.
Mahalo and miigwetch,
Tom Hastings
Whitefeather House
3315 N Russet
Portland OR 97217
503 327 8250

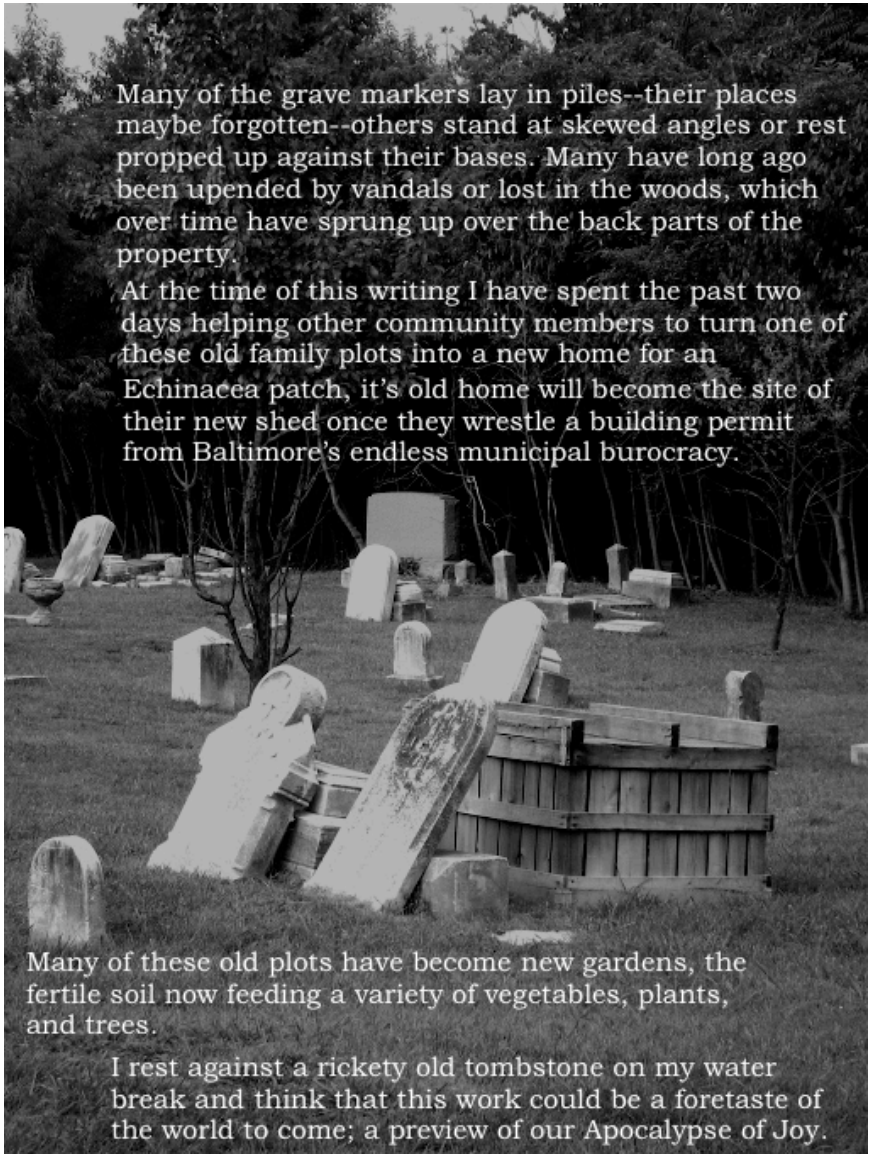
Jonah House and the Apocalypse of Joy

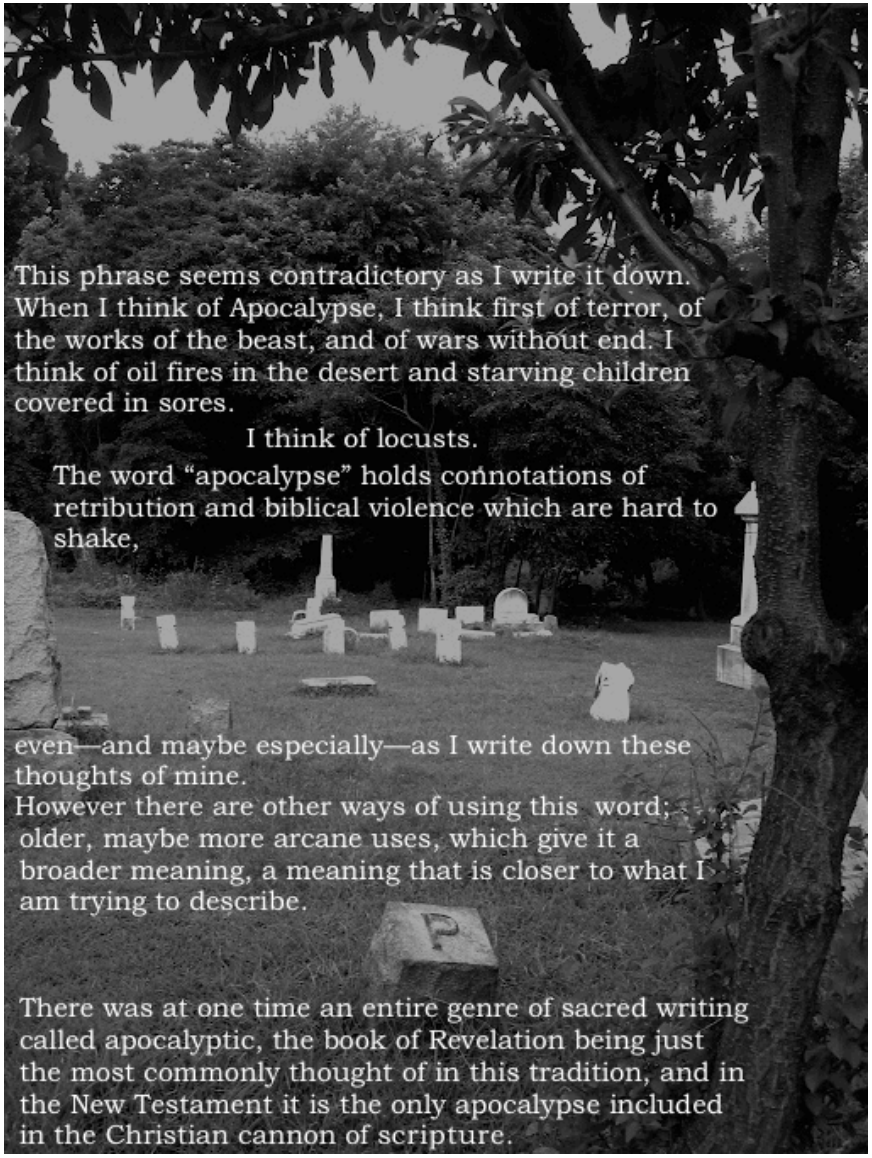
By Chris Rooney

Jonah House—the resistance-based community formed by Phil Berrigan, Liz McAllister as well as many others over the decades—rests on a derelict cemetery in the ruins of a Baltimore ghetto. Coming to the house from anywhere the visitor is first shocked and saddened by the sheer number of vacant and condemned houses.

Whole blocks of row houses boarded up and abandoned.
Block upon block, row upon row, this city could house every one
of its poor if only they would devote the effort and the money
to restoring this neighbourhood and the others like it. My first
stunned impression was that this was a city in ruins, it's inhabitants
condemned--like the buildings --to a life of destitution
and abandonment. However Jonah House, and the land it rests
on provide a prophetic contrast: Imagine a cemetery bursting forth
with new life, and a peace of the soul that rushes forth as smooth
and quiet and as gentile as spring water in the hills of Virginia.
Many of the headstones and family plots are a hundred years old
or more, they are made from white stone, brown or grey marble,
and their creases shaded in by black lichen.




Many of the grave markers lay in piles--their places maybe forgotten--others stand at skewed angles or rest propped up against their bases. Many have long ago been upended by vandals or lost in the woods, which over time have sprung up over the back parts of the property.
At the time of this writing I have spent the past two days helping other community members to turn one of these old family plots into a new home for an Echinacea patch, it's old home will become the site of their new shed once they wrestle a building permit from Baltimore's endless municipal burocracy.
Many of these old plots have become new gardens, the fertile soil now feeding a variety of vegetables, plants, and trees.
I rest against a rickety old tombstone on my water break and think that this work could be a foretaste of the world to come; a preview of our Apocalypse of Joy.


This phrase seems contradictory as I write it down. When I think of Apocalypse, I think first of terror, of the works of the beast, and of wars without end. I think of oil fires in the desert and starving children covered in sores.
I think of locusts.
The word "apocalypse" holds connotations of retribution and biblical violence which are hard to shake,
even—and maybe especially—as I write down these thoughts of mine.
However there are other ways of using this word; older, maybe more arcane uses, which give it a broader meaning, a meaning that is closer to what I am trying to describe.
There was at one time an entire genre of sacred writing called apocalyptic, the book of Revelation being just the most commonly thought of in this tradition, and in the New Testament it is the only apocalypse included in the Christian cannon of scripture.

In the Old Testament though, many of the prophets wrote things that could be thought of as part of this apocalyptic tradition. These were the writings that related to the end of days but—as in parts of Isaiah—they could be incredibly uplifting and positive. These writings tell of the end times but maybe more importantly they tell the reader of God's promises for the world to come. They speak of a time when there will be no more suffering and no more war, when people will turn their weapons into tools built to care for the earth and to bring forth life.

I find in my theology that it is very easy to focus on the cross while forgetting about the resurrection. As a Catholic praying the rosary it's the sorrowful mysteries I find to be the easiest to visualise. And it's my observation that in modern Christianity it could be said that often we are more oriented towards the cross than we are towards the tomb.

I have also reflected on what it means to be part of the body of Christ and how if our ancestors nailed Jesus up to the tree then how much more will we nail ourselves to that same cross. The modern concepts of so-called "Total War", and "the global war on terror", the hypocritical outcries over weapons of mass destruction and the false diplomacy of "regime change" call to mind the nails which sit poised at our palms, our wrists bound beyond tightness, waiting only for the hammer to drive them in.

I think about all these things and I find very much that I need to be reminded that the cross wasn't the end of Christ, simply the end of death and the end of the power of death. There is no end to Christ, and if Jesus was raised up on the third day then in our third day, we will be as well.

And it's with these thoughts of resurrection that I returned joyful to work in the graveyard. I might, in my moments of personal apocalypse, wonder what will become of the graveyards? When the dead are raised will these monuments disappear? Or will we take up our ploughshares to till that fertile soil, and to plant orchards amongst the mausoleums where our children can dance happily and our lions can lay down with our lambs? <

Reclaiming The Issues: Islamic Or Republican Fascism?

By Thom Hartmann

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In the years since George W. Bush first used 9/11 as his own "Reichstag fire" to gut the Constitution and enhance the power and wealth of his corporate cronies, many across the political spectrum have accused him and his Republican support group of being fascists.

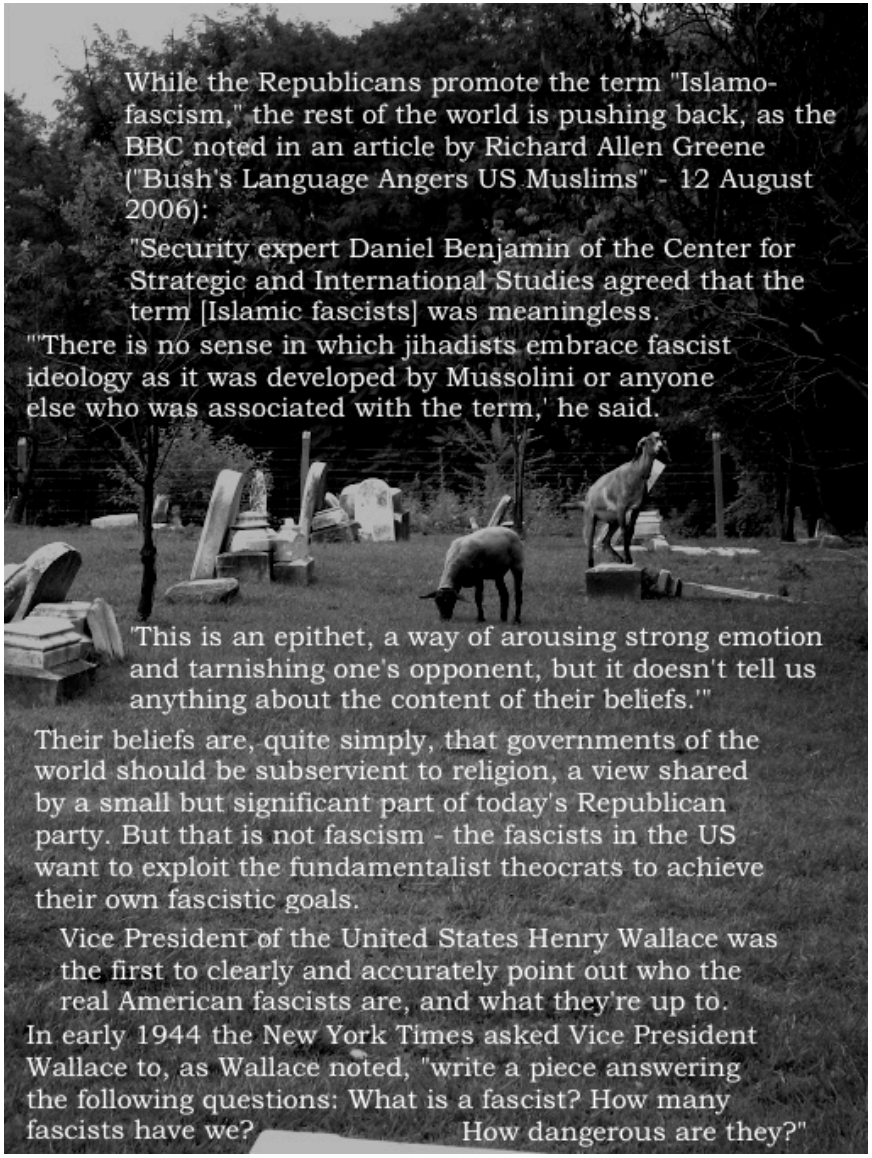
On the right,The John Birch Society's website editor recently opined of the Bush Administration's warrantless wiretap program: "This is to say that from the administration's perspective, the president is, in effect, our living constitution. This is, in a specific and unmistakable sense, fascist."

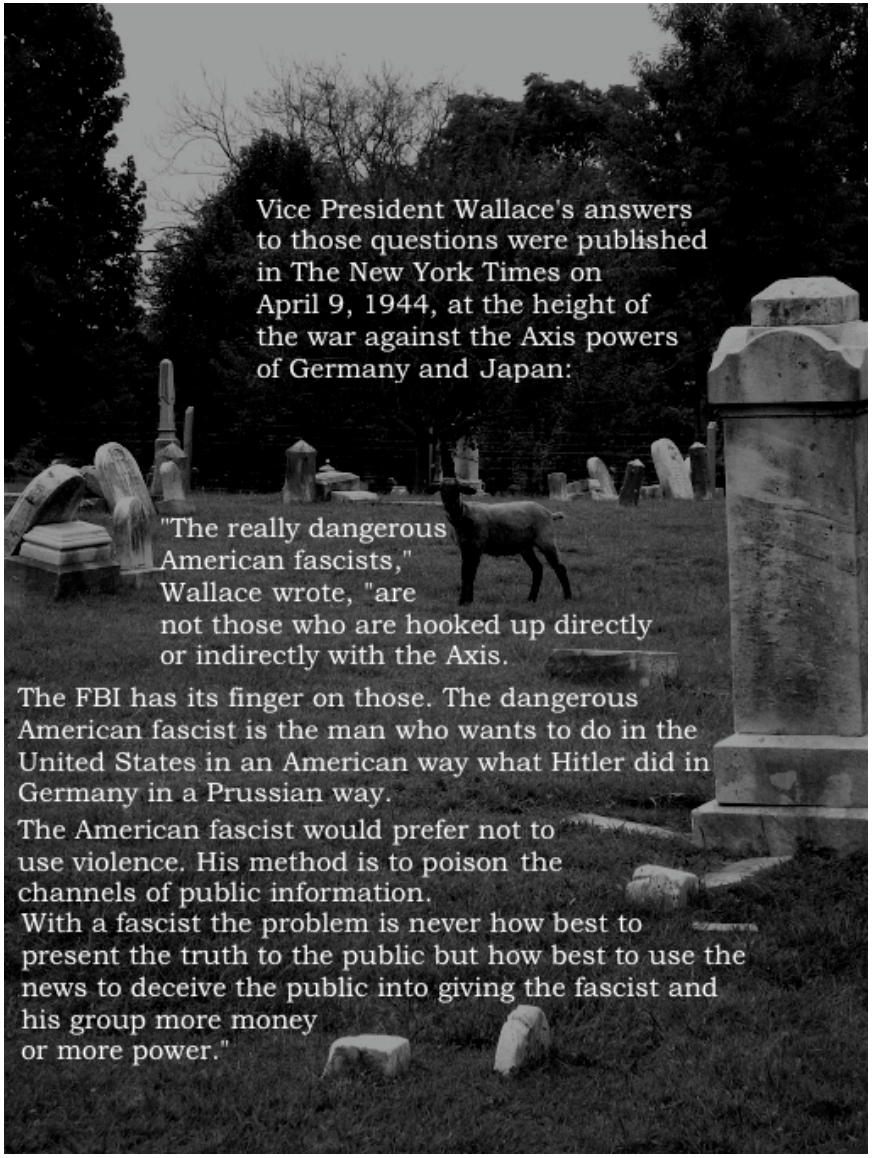
On the left, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. specifically indicts the Bush administration for fascistic behavior in his book " Crimes Against Nature: How George W. Bush and his Corporate Pals Are Plundering the Country and Hijacking Our Democracy."

Genuine American fascists are on the run, and part of their survival strategy is to redefine the term "fascism" so it can't be applied to them any more. Most recently, George W. Bush said: "This nation is at war with Islamic fascists who will use any means to destroy those of us who love freedom, to hurt our nation."

In fact, the Islamic fundamentalists who apparently perpetrated 9/11 and other crimes in Spain and the United Kingdom are advocating a fundamentalist theocracy, not fascism.

But theocracy - the merging of religion and government - is also on the plate for the new American fascists (just as it was for Hitler, who based the Nazi death cult on a "new Christianity" that would bring "a thousand years of peace"), so they don't want to use that term, either.


While the Republicans promote the term "Islamo-fascism," the rest of the world is pushing back, as the BBC noted in an article by Richard Allen Greene ("Bush's Language Angers US Muslims" - 12 August 2006):
"Security expert Daniel Benjamin of the Center for Strategic and International Studies agreed that the term [Islamic fascists] was meaningless.
"'There is no sense in which jihadists embrace fascist ideology as it was developed by Mussolini or anyone else who was associated with the term,' he said.
'This is an epithet, a way of arousing strong emotion and tarnishing one's opponent, but it doesn't tell us anything about the content of their beliefs.'"
Their beliefs are, quite simply, that governments of the world should be subservient to religion, a view shared by a small but significant part of today's Republican party. But that is not fascism - the fascists in the US want to exploit the fundamentalist theocrats to achieve their own fascistic goals.
Vice President of the United States Henry Wallace was the first to clearly and accurately point out who the real American fascists are, and what they're up to.
In early 1944 the New York Times asked Vice President Wallace to, as Wallace noted, "write a piece answering the following questions: What is a fascist? How many fascists have we? How dangerous are they?"


Vice President Wallace's answers to those questions were published in The New York Times on April 9, 1944, at the height of the war against the Axis powers of Germany and Japan:
"The really dangerous American fascists," Wallace wrote, "are not those who are hooked up directly or indirectly with the Axis.
The FBI has its finger on those. The dangerous American fascist is the man who wants to do in the United States in an American way what Hitler did in Germany in a Prussian way.
The American fascist would prefer not to use violence. His method is to poison the channels of public information.
With a fascist the problem is never how best to present the truth to the public but how best to use the news to deceive the public into giving the fascist and his group more money or more power."

In this, Vice President Wallace was using the classic definition of the word "fascist" - the definition Mussolini had in mind when he claimed to have invented the word. (It was actually Italian philosopher Giovanni Gentile who wrote the entry in the Encyclopedia Italiana that said: "Fascism should more appropriately be called corporatism because it is a merger of state and corporate power." Mussolini, however, affixed his name to the entry, and claimed credit for it.)

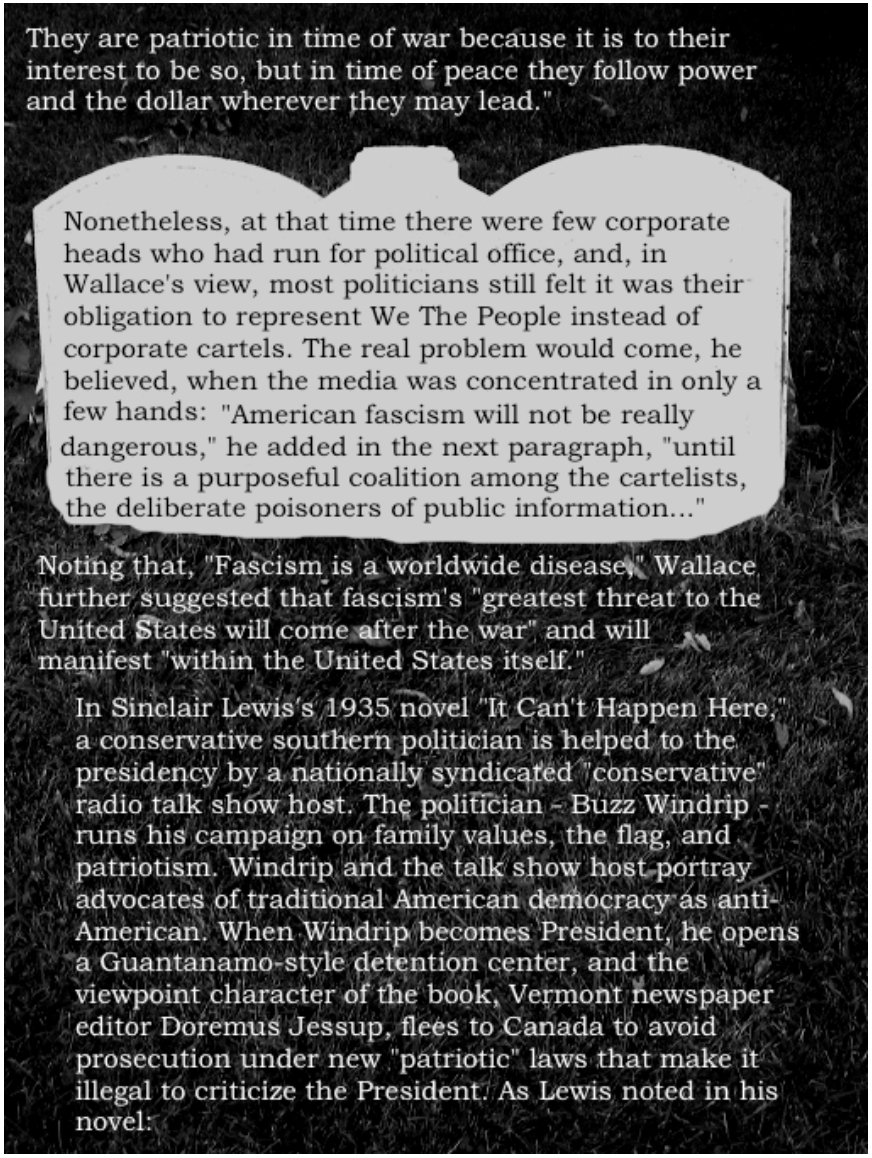
As the 1983 American Heritage Dictionary noted, fascism is: "A system of government that exercises a dictatorship of the extreme right, typically through the merging of state and business leadership, together with belligerent nationalism." (The US dictionary definition has gotten somewhat squishier since then, as all the larger dictionary companies have been bought up by multinational corporations.)

Mussolini was quite straightforward about all this. In a 1923 pamphlet titled "The Doctrine of Fascism" he wrote, "If classical liberalism spells individualism, Fascism spells government." But not a government of, by, and for We The People - instead, it would be a government of, by, and for the most powerful corporate interests in the nation.

In 1938, Mussolini brought his vision of fascism into full reality when he dissolved Parliament and replaced it with the "Camera dei Fasci e delle Corporazioni" - the Chamber of the Fascist Corporations. Corporations were still privately owned, but now instead of having to sneak their money to folks like John Boehner and covertly write legislation, they were openly in charge of the government.

Vice President Wallace bluntly laid out his concern about the same happening here in America in his 1944 Times article:

" If we define an American fascist as one who in case of conflict puts money and power ahead of human beings, then there are undoubtedly several million fascists in the United States. There are probably several hundred thousand if we narrow the definition to include only those who in their search for money and power are ruthless and deceitful. ...


They are patriotic in time of war because it is to their interest to be so, but in time of peace they follow power and the dollar wherever they may lead."
Nonetheless, at that time there were few corporate heads who had run for political office, and, in Wallace's view, most politicians still felt it was their obligation to represent We The People instead of corporate cartels. The real problem would come, he believed, when the media was concentrated in only a few hands: "American fascism will not be really dangerous," he added in the next paragraph, "until there is a purposeful coalition among the cartelists, the deliberate poisoners of public information..."
Noting that, "Fascism is a worldwide disease," Wallace further suggested that fascism's "greatest threat to the United States will come after the war" and will manifest "within the United States itself."
In Sinclair Lewis's 1935 novel "It Can't Happen Here," a conservative southern politician is helped to the presidency by a nationally syndicated "conservative" radio talk show host. The politician - Buzz Windrip - runs his campaign on family values, the flag, and patriotism. Windrip and the talk show host portray advocates of traditional American democracy as anti-American. When Windrip becomes President, he opens a Guantanamo-style detention center, and the viewpoint character of the book, Vermont newspaper editor Doremus Jessup, flees to Canada to avoid prosecution under new "patriotic" laws that make it illegal to criticize the President. As Lewis noted in his novel:

"The President, with something of his former good-humor [said]: 'There are two [political] parties, the Corporate and those who don't belong to any party at all, and so, to use a common phrase, are just out of luck!' The idea of the Corporate or Corporative State, Secretary [of State] Sarason had more or less taken from Italy." And, President "Windrip's partisans called themselves the Corporatists, or, familiarly, the 'Corpos,' which nickname was generally used."

Lewis, the first American writer to win a Nobel Prize, was world famous by 1944, as was his book "It Can't Happen Here." And several well-known and powerful Americans, including Prescott Bush, had lost businesses in the early 1940s because of charges by Roosevelt that they were doing business with Hitler. These events all, no doubt, colored Vice President Wallace's thinking when he wrote in The New York Times:

"Still another danger is represented by those who, paying lip service to democracy and the common welfare, in their insatiable greed for money and the power which money gives, do not hesitate surreptitiously to evade the laws designed to safeguard the public from monopolistic extortion. American fascists of this stamp were clandestinely aligned with their German counterparts before the war, and are even now preparing to resume where they left off, after 'the present unpleasantness' ceases."

Thus, the rich get richer (and more powerful) on the backs of the poor and the middle class, giant corporate behemoths wipe out small and middle sized businesses, and a corporate iron fist is seizing control of our government itself. As I detail in my new book "Screwed: The Undeclared War Against The Middle Class," the primary beneficiaries of this new fascism are the corporatists, while the once-outspoken middle class of the 1950s-1980s is systematically being replaced by a silent serf-class of the working poor.

As Wallace wrote, some in big business "are willing to jeopardize the structure of American liberty to gain some temporary advantage." He added, "Monopolists who fear competition and who distrust democracy because it stands for equal opportunity would like to secure their position against small and energetic enterprise [companies]. In an effort to eliminate the possibility of any rival growing up, some monopolists would sacrifice democracy itself."

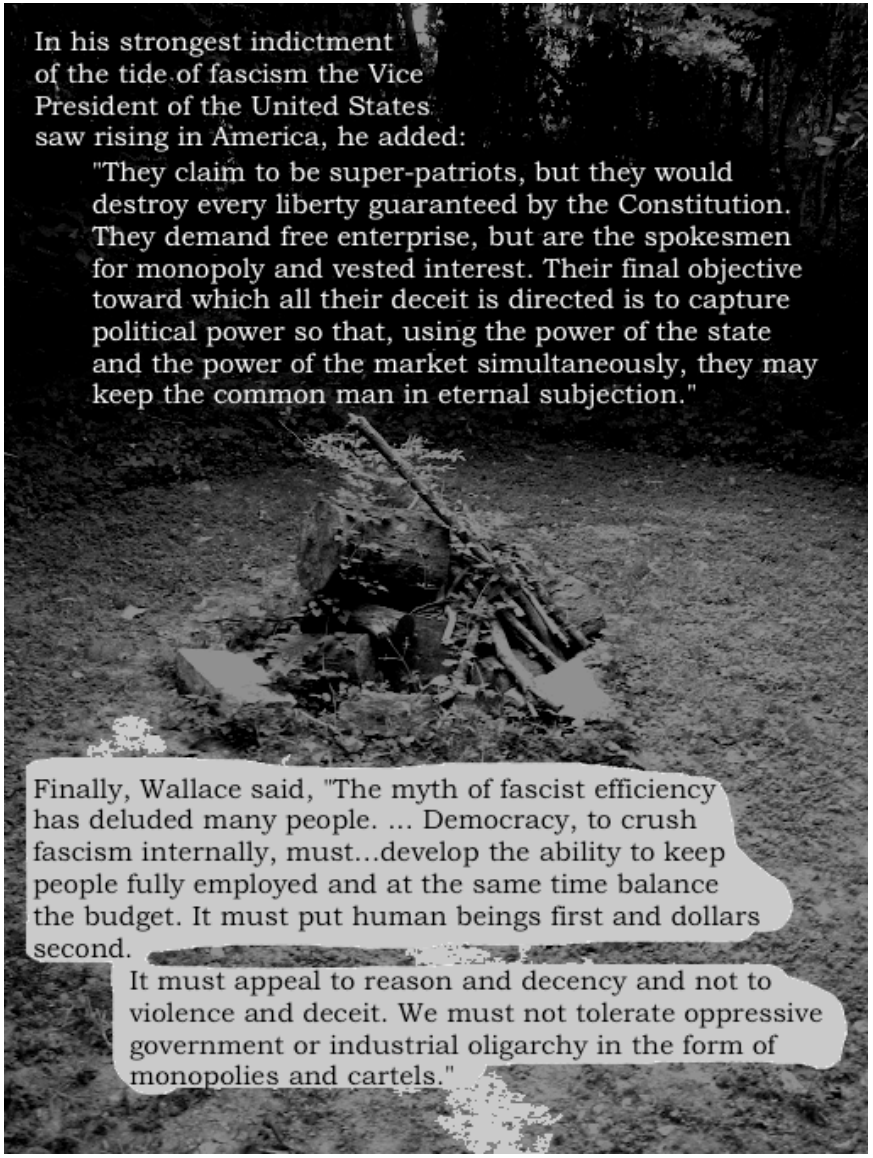
But American fascists who would want former CEOs as President, Vice President, House Majority Whip, and Senate Majority Leader, and write legislation with corporate interests in mind, don't generally talk to We The People about their real agenda, or the harm it does to small businesses and working people. Instead, as Hitler did with the trade union leaders and the Jews, they point to a "them" to pin with blame and distract people from the harms of their economic policies.

In a comment prescient of George W. Bush's recent suggestion that civilization itself is at risk because of gays or Muslims, Wallace continued:

" The symptoms of fascist thinking are colored by environment and adapted to immediate circumstances. But always and everywhere they can be identified by their appeal to prejudice and by the desire to play upon the fears and vanities of different groups in order to gain power. It is no coincidence that the growth of modern tyrants has in every case been heralded by the growth of prejudice. It may be shocking to some people in this country to realize that, without meaning to do so, they hold views in common with Hitler when they preach discrimination..."

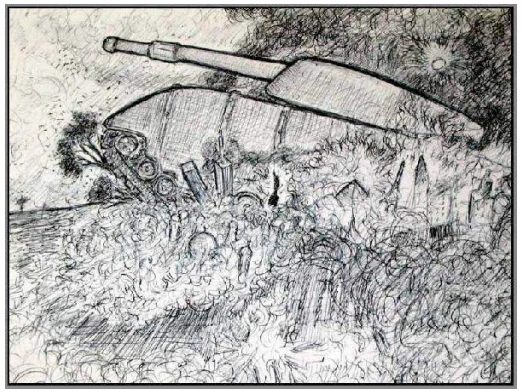
But even at this, Wallace noted, American fascists would have to lie to the people in order to gain power. And, because they were in bed with the nation's largest corporations - who could gain control of newspapers and broadcast media - they could promote their lies with ease.

"The American fascists are most easily recognized by their deliberate perversion of truth and fact," Wallace wrote. "Their newspapers and propaganda carefully cultivate every fissure of disunity, every crack in the common front against fascism. They use every opportunity to impugn democracy."


In his strongest indictment of the tide of fascism the Vice President of the United States saw rising in America, he added:
"They claim to be super-patriots, but they would destroy every liberty guaranteed by the Constitution. They demand free enterprise, but are the spokesmen for monopoly and vested interest. Their final objective toward which all their deceit is directed is to capture political power so that, using the power of the state and the power of the market simultaneously, they may keep the common man in eternal subjection."
Finally, Wallace said, "The myth of fascist efficiency has deluded many people. ... Democracy, to crush fascism internally, must...develop the ability to keep people fully employed and at the same time balance the budget. It must put human beings first and dollars second.
It must appeal to reason and decency and not to violence and deceit. We must not tolerate oppressive government or industrial oligarchy in the form of monopolies and cartels."

This liberal vision of an egalitarian America in which very large businesses and media monopolies are broken up under the 1890 Sherman Anti-Trust Act (which Reagan stopped enforcing, leading to the mergers & acquisitions frenzy that continues to this day) was the driving vision of the New Deal (and of "Trust Buster" Teddy Roosevelt a generation earlier).

As Wallace's President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, said when he accepted his party's renomination in 1936 in Philadelphia:



"...Out of this modern civilization, economic royalists [have] carved new dynasties.... It was natural and perhaps human that the privileged princes of these new economic dynasties, thirsting for power, reached out for control over government itself. They created a new despotism and wrapped it in the robes of legal sanction.... And as a result the average man once more confronts the problem that faced the Minute Man...."

Speaking indirectly of the fascists that Wallace would directly name almost a decade later, Roosevelt brought the issue to its core:

"These economic royalists complain that we seek to overthrow the institutions of America. What they really complain of is that we seek to take away their power."

But, he thundered in that speech:

"Our allegiance to American institutions requires the overthrow of this kind of power!"

In 2006, we again stand at the same crossroad Roosevelt and Wallace confronted during the Great Depression and World War II. Fascism is again rising in America, this time calling itself "compassionate conservatism," and "the free market" in a "flat" world. The RNC's behavior today eerily parallels the day in 1936 when Roosevelt said:

"In vain they seek to hide behind the flag and the Constitution. In their blindness they forget what the flag and the Constitution stand for."

President Roosevelt and Vice President Wallace's warnings have come full circle. Thus it's now critical that we reclaim the word "fascist" to describe current-day Republican policies, support progressive websites that spread the good word, and join together this November at the ballot box to stop fascist election fraud and this most recent incarnation of Republican-fascism from seizing complete and irretrievable control of our nation. <

I'll Not Go Quietly
September 8, 2006

Last month we published an installment of Steven's column where he described being forcibly taken to the hole. The letter below was written before the last one and provides some context for his resistance and the brutal treatment, which he received as a result.
--CR

Well, my friends,
I'm just sitting here wrapping up my last few days of vacation. I hadn't planned on hanging out much longer on level one, the reasons for which will be evident further along in this missive. But the true catalyst occurred when I got back to my cell following my last visit with Jennie on Friday. My neighbour's toilet has been messing up for 37 hours. For some reason it wouldn't stop flushing.
We've been trying to get maintenance down here to fix it for almost 2 full days, three shifts of guards had been talked to, but they never got the problem fixed and no rank was ever called to address the situation. So, I'm coming back to my cell and the vato {...} pick up everything on your floor; indication that he's about to flood the wing with water. Kind of fucked up that we have to resort to breaking the rules to get them to follow the rules.
But I went and picked up all the loose bits of paper I keep around my cell (it often looks like a tornado's been through my cell) and decided, one man flooding is not gonna get enough water to get

ranks attention. So I stood in solidarity (as a dude is SUPPOSED to fuckin do back here--but doesn't often happen) with the vato and helped flood the area with water. Amazingly once the water started to flow (along with my horrendous rendition of singin in the rain) it took maintenance only 5 minutes to show up. They unplugged the toilet and left. Didn't even bother to fix the problem. My neighbour got back into his cell, flushed the toilet and it started doing it again. The swine, Sgt. Just came down to the wing to make the COs put the people in the recreation back into their cells, had my neighbours water turned off, and left. The swine comes back later and gives us both a disciplinary case for- well, I got one for creating a disturbance that resulted in a significant disruption of correctional officers activities.

My neighbour got one for destruction of state property. Yeah, the toilet's fucked up and he's getting charged $600 for it even though he didn't do a fuckin thing to it. Like the stand up convict the vato is, he tried to tell the Sgt. that I wasn't involved, only he flooded. Sgt. swine said, "That's Woods, I know he was involved." Hell, I never denied it. But he just assumed, because of my past history, that I was involved.

Fuck him.

Well, later that night, we got 2nd shift to turn my neighbour's water back on, and guess what? The problem was fixed. His water pressure was turned up too high and it was flooding the pipes keeping the shit open so it wouldn't stop flushing. 15 seconds to turn the pressure down and the toilet works perfectly. His case got changed from destruction of state property to clogging the toilet with paper, causing a disruption of correctional officers activities.

So, were both going down to level two because the fucking swine couldn't take 15 seconds of their time to turn my neighbour's water pressure down. Well, I'm not going to level 2. I'm goin straight to level 3. They'll probably have to cut the door off my cell to get me out of it. They got me fucked up if they think I'm going to fucking cooperate with 'em any longer. I've had to put up with too much these last 7 months.

The assistant warden has been stepping all over us, disregarding all kinds of policy, making up his own when it suits him (even on shit he's not allowed to fuck with). His swine underlings have been on a major power trip, which has resulted in several staff assaults & attempted staff assaults. If they don't act how he forces them to, THEY get in trouble. If they do, they get hurt.

Assistant warden is scared to walk the pods so his officers get shit and piss and shanks thrown at them instead of him. He's created a fucking mad house back here. While I see nothing wrong in a bit of resistance, I can see that the assistant wardens plan is working push them 'til they start reacting violently. There's a campaign right now to show that death row inmates are monsters. It's on the news, all over the internet. Capital punishment looks really bad right now, so they have to do everything in their power to justify it.

That's why you see cases like O'Brien's & Browns showcased on the news. We can prove that Texas has killed at LEAST 4 innocent people and they really have nothing significant to combat that with. However, if the dudes back here lash out violently and seriously hurt or kill someone yep, were fucked. So I'm trying to point this out and trying to encourage a less violent response to the swine's provocations. More shit, no shanks. Disgusting, I know, but its better to humiliate and degrade the swine than physically hurt them. I really don't want to see any of the COs getting stabbed, that's kind of fucked up.

It's easy to resist without being violent, and its a hell of a lot more effective here on the inside to show the true face of our oppressors as they violently retaliate to our non-violent actions. There's about to be a major movement back here. The swine know, they can feel it, they're already separating people so that all the trouble makers aren't together.

The trick's going to be going off in such a way that gets more positive attention than negative, and getting everyone on the same page so that the states justification for capital punishment fails; we're gonna need your support out there now more than ever.

Right, so next time you hear from me, I'm going to be in the hole. And the revolution, at least my own personal one, will be in full swing. It may be a while before you hear from me again. I'll be forced to pay to replace the cell door they have to remove to extract me from my cell. Then I'll be kept segregated with nothing but a hospital gown in my cell for a few days. My account will likely be frozen and I wont be able to get stamps right away. But then, Anarchy in Chains is gonna get a hell of a lot more interesting, as I chronicle the chaos around me.

I'm gonna twist this off now. Ill be back in a while, don't know when. But I will.

In Solidarity

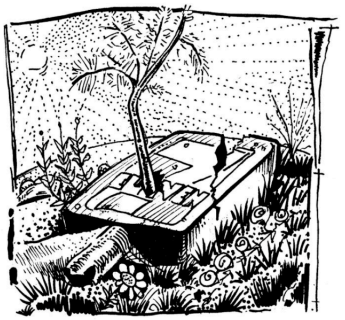
Steven Woods
Polunsky Death Camp <

Restorative Justice

Overcoming the disparity between God's justice and mercy

By J. Barrett Lee

A murderer puts a gun in her mouth and pulls the trigger. An instant later, she is standing outside the gates of heaven. Should God let her in? If one says no, then one denies God's unconditional love for the murderer. If one says yes, then one denies God's righteous justice for the victim.



This question has been asked, in one form or another, by theologians and philosophers throughout the centuries. Some have concluded that one or the other must be true, but not both. Either God is all-loving and there is no judgment for our sins, or God is a harsh judge who shows no mercy.

Others have concluded that both are somehow true in a kind of paradox. These thinkers have usually constructed a system to determine whether one receives judgment or mercy. For example, some might say that God is the judge of the cosmos, but God will forego his judgment and offer mercy to the adherents of a certain religion.

The disparity between God's justice and mercy presupposes a certain model of judgment called *Retributive Justice.* Under this system, the offender is made to "pay the price" for her actions. This system of thought dominates most western criminal justice systems. Retributive Justice also underpins the theology of penal substitution, which states that Jesus is made to suffer for the sins of humanity in order to satisfy God's wrath. The motto of Retributive Justice is, "An eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth."

Under the Retributive model, God's mercy and justice are necessarily opposed to one another. If justice is to be served, then the price must be paid. This is why, according to the theology of penal substitution, Jesus had to die on the cross for the sins of humanity.

The wrath of God had to be satisfied, so someone had to pay the price of sin, which is death. In order to make mercy available to humanity, God's justice was redirected toward Jesus, who willingly suffered in humanity's place. This view is known, to some degree, in every major branch of Christianity, but is commonly associated with evangelical Protestantism.

While Retributive Justice is the most commonly accepted model for thinking about justice, it is by no means the only model. In the past few decades, *Restorative Justice* has become something of a buzzword in theological and criminal justice circles. Under this model, the offender has created a rift between herself and the victim by her actions. The goal is to restore the relationship to a state of harmony, not to enact revenge upon the offender.

On the theological level, humanity has created a wound through sin. The wound runs between humanity and God, as well as between individuals and groups. God is seen as a physician, rather than as a judge. His desire is to heal the wound, not to punish the offender, humanity in this case.

In order for the relational wound to be healed, the offender must empathize with her victim. She must feel what the victim felt in order to come to grips with the reality of her actions. It is an essential, but not the only, step in the process of restoration. This is the goal of judgment in the Restorative model: to help the offender, through empathy, to own up to her actions and take responsibility for them. If punishment takes place, it is merely a means to this end; it is not an end in itself.

Let us return then, to the story of our hypothetical murderer at the gates of heaven. For the sake of argument, let us assume that this murderer was completely unrepentant in life and made no amends with the victim, the victim's family, or God. In that moment, standing before the throne of God, said murderer would be confronted with the full reality of everything she has done. She is suddenly without the trappings of power, money, excuse, or whatever else kept her from facing that reality in life. Before the piercing gaze of God, her life is an open book.
In that moment, confronted with this reality, her only recourse is to throw herself on the mercy of the court, as it were.

She can feel, in all its brutality, the pain and death which she inflicted on another. Here, at last, is the potential for empathy.

Imagine then, in this moment of hopelessness and pain, a single person steps out from the multitudes surrounding the throne of God. It is the murderer's victim. Picture her standing before the huddled form of her killer. Then see her embrace that murderer, offering words of forgiveness as the wound between them is closed. Finally, see God himself step down off his throne to join the embrace and welcome the lost child home.

It is a compelling picture. Who would not marvel and rejoice at the sight of Hitler being embraced by twelve million Holocaust victims? Whose heart would not skip a beat at the sight of an Iraqi child leading George W. Bush by the hand into the gates of eternity? Is this not the wonderful vision given to us in the Bible? Does St. John's Apocalypse not anticipate the day when "all things shall be made new" and "every tear shall be wiped away"?

Theologically, the Restorative model gives us a means to reconcile mercy and justice. If we understand justice restoratively, it cannot be complete unless there is mercy. Likewise, mercy is meaningless unless there is not some way for the offender to face the reality of who she is and what she has done.

It is critical to notice that there is no place for vengeance in the Restorative model. This way of "doing justice" and "loving mercy" seeks the liberation of the oppressor. According to this gospel, heaven would be incomplete without murderers, Hitlers, and Bushes. It requires of us all a deep and abiding faith in God's ability to bring about justice and mercy. This faith is not just for the afterlife either. As we work for justice and peace on earth, our certainty can empower us to march boldly before the powers that be. We can laugh in the face of their threats and insults, drowning out the noise of their weapons with our singing:

"We shall overcome." <

Correction from issue 11.

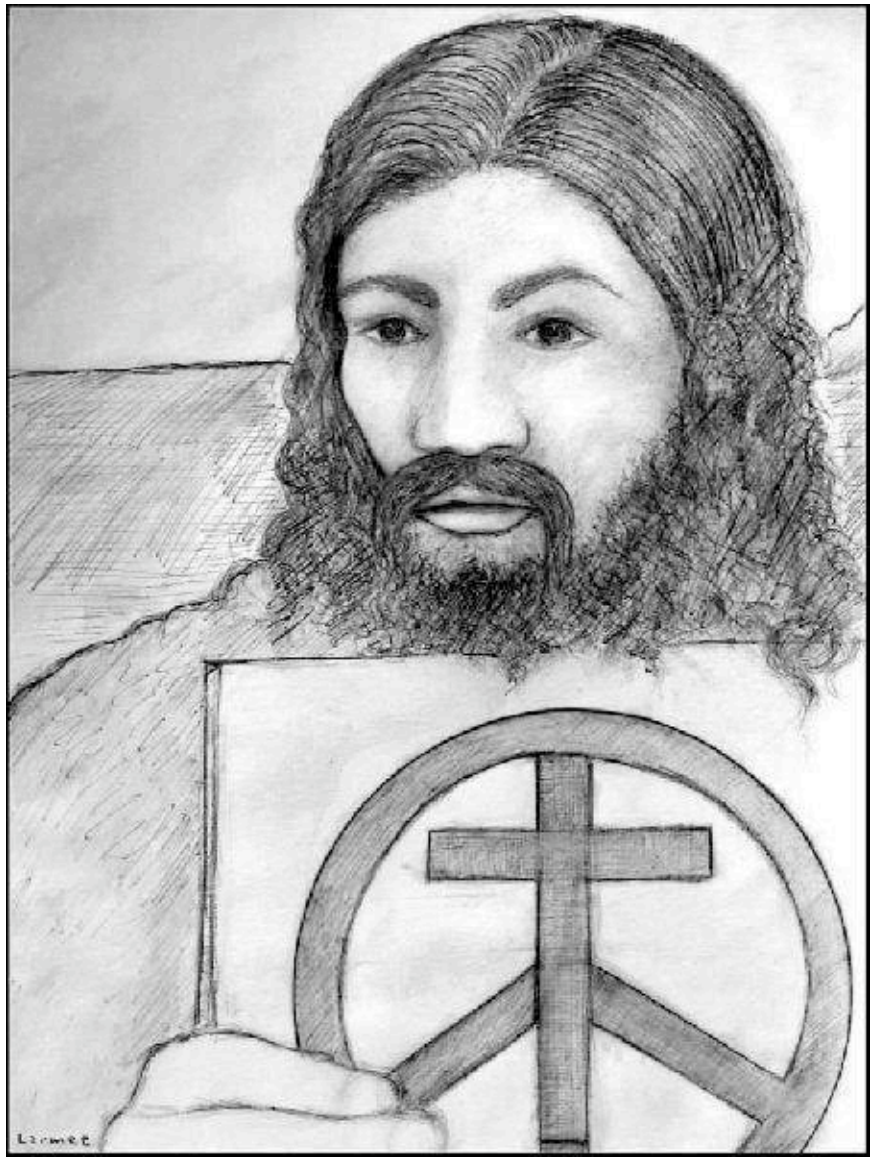
The cover art for Issue 11 was not credited, the artist's name was Samih Abu Zakieh director of the Palestinian Child Arts Centre www.pcac.net I found his art on my friend Joy's blog www.inpalestine.blogspot.com my thanks go out to both of them.

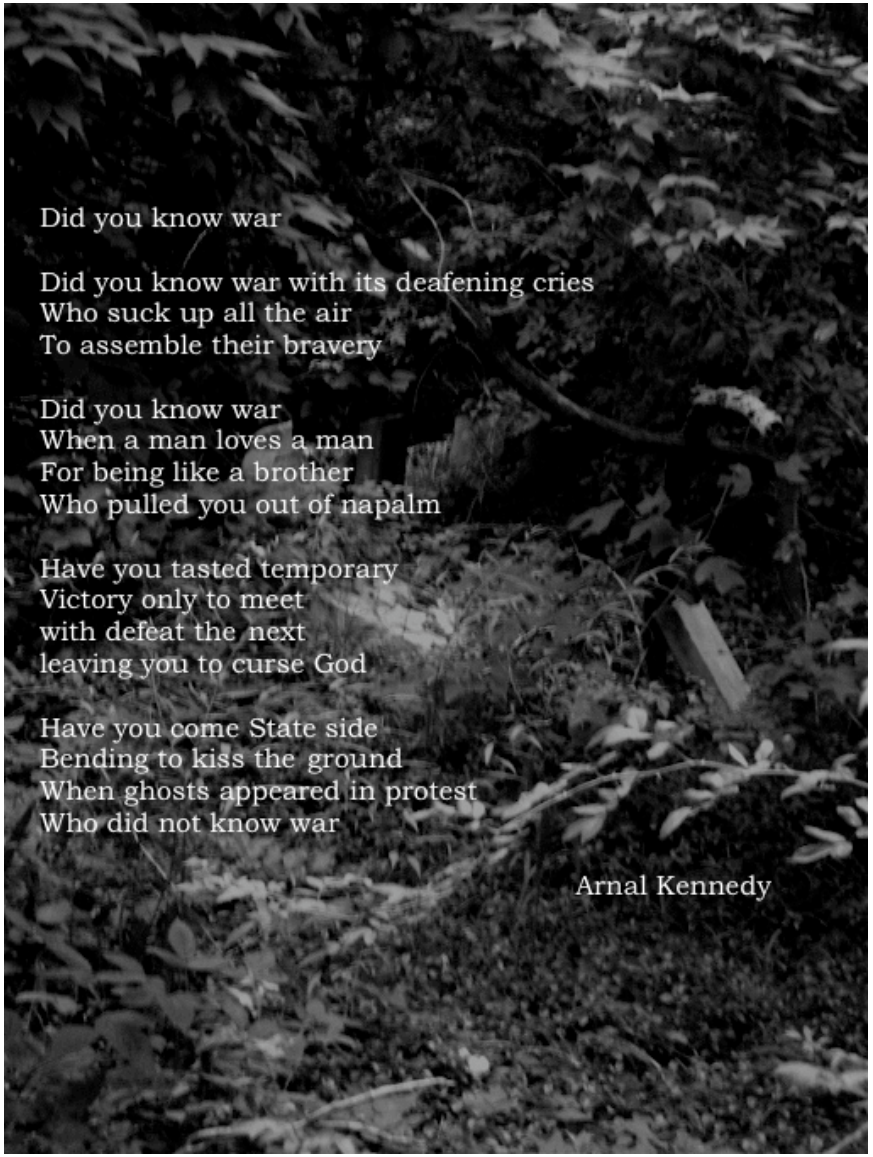
The Christian Radical needs your art and writing.

We are running out of photos to use as backdrops for the text, we

are also looking for original illustrations to use together with text. Art must be in black and white or grey scale. Topics we like include religious iconography and symbols, political/libertarian images, cartoons, and photography. For copyright purposes please only send your own work. If you have links to good websites where we can find work by other people who you think should be in our zine those are good as well. Please send images as .gif or .jpg attachments to the.christian.radical.zine@gmail.com Please also include a little about you. We are also looking for original written pieces on a variety of topics. If you think your writing might fit in our zine please send your stuff to the above address.

Thanking you in advance,
Chris Rooney and Karl Germyn




Did you know war
Did you know war with its deafening cries
Who suck up all the air
To assemble their bravery
Did you know war
When a man loves a man
For being like a brother
Who pulled you out of napalm
Have you tasted temporary
Victory only to meet
with defeat the next
leaving you to curse God
Have you come State side
Bending to kiss the ground
When ghosts appeared in protest
Who did not know war
Arnal Kennedy

We Believe So We Speak
2nd Corinthians 4:13

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The cover of this month's issue and the photo on this page are courtesy of Karen Pink, the cemetery pictures were taken this past August by Chris Rooney while visiting Jonah House in Baltimore Maryland. The drawing of the tank and the illustration on Christ were drawn by Kevin Larmee, the picture on page 20 is courtesy of Joy Ellison, the other pictures were taken from flagblackned.net and radicalgraphics.org

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Thank you again for reading.
Chris Rooney, and Karl Germyn
Editors, The Christian Radical